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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
Ongoing priorities and themes

Information received from the United Nations system

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Summary

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues makes substantive recommendations of particular relevance to the work of various divisions in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs — such as data-related work, women and sustainable development — which in turn have been increasingly taking indigenous issues into consideration in their respective work. The progress and achievements witnessed in those areas in 2005 are contained in the present report.

* E/C.19/2006/1

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I. Statistics Division

1. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has collected data on national and/or ethnic groups, languages and religions from population and housing censuses for more than 50 years, using standardized questionnaires sent to national statistical offices. The collected data are processed and disseminated by the Division through the Demographic Yearbook system, which is designed to collect, compile and disseminate official national demographic and social statistics at the international level. Data are disseminated through print publications such as the *Demographic Yearbook*, over the Internet and on CD-ROMs dedicated to special topics.

2. Before 2005, no data on ethnocultural characteristics had been published since 1993. By the end of 2005, the Division published data on national and/or ethnic groups on the website of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Work is underway to review data on language and religion by mid-2006.

3. One of the main activities of the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch of the Statistics Division has been coordinating the revision and update of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*. In August 2005, an expert group meeting on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses was held to lay down the modalities for updating and revising the existing publications. One of the areas to be revised is ethnicity, taking into account relevant issues pertaining to indigenous people. The experts are drafting the revised section after having consulted the report of the Permanent Forum at its fourth session (E/2005/43).

4. Some of the key issues being considered in the above revision include the importance of national context, the process nature of ethnic identification, the importance of self-identification, and the potential role of statistics to measure the well-being of indigenous peoples.

5. The Division is currently reviewing national practices in the collection and dissemination of statistics on ethnocultural characteristics. The focus of the study is the types of data being collected and disseminated by different countries and the types of international activities conducted to improve data collection and methodologies. In addition, the report on national practices will cover current issues related to the collection and dissemination of ethnocultural statistics.

6. Another development is a website to disseminate data on ethnocultural characteristics and other information relevant to statistics on indigenous peoples (see http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/popchar/default.htm). The website is being continually improved and updated with the support of the Permanent Forum. It features links to data available on national statistical offices' websites. The Division has developed a census metadata database that contains questions included in country questionnaires during the 2000 round of population and housing censuses (1995-2004). It has also developed web interfaces for the databases and expects to make them available online in the near future.

7. The Division is supportive of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum relating to statistical work. The main obstacle has been the heavy workload of staff, specifically the staff time requirements dedicated to the flagship publication, *The World's Women 2005: Progress in Statistics*.

II. Division for the Advancement of Women

8. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women continues to review the situation of indigenous women in reporting States in a systematic manner. During its thirty-third session from 5 to 22 July 2005, the Committee raised the issue of indigenous women in the constructive dialogue and in the concluding comments of those States parties that have indigenous peoples among their populations (e.g., the third, fourth, fifth and sixth combined report of Guyana, CEDAW/C/GUY/CO/3-6).

9. The Commission on the Status of Women continues to address the situation of indigenous women primarily in its work on the follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. In March 2005, during its forty-ninth session, the Commission adopted resolution 49/7 on indigenous women: beyond the 10-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The issue of indigenous women was also highlighted in resolution 49/2 on eliminating demand for trafficked women and girls for all forms of exploitation and in the panel discussions on the linkages between the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and on the future perspectives on the promotion of gender equality. Further information about the resolutions and summaries of the panel discussions are contained in document E/2005/27.

10. The situation of indigenous women was covered as part of the 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action. The Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with the regional commissions, compiled information from Governments on major achievements and obstacles in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly through questionnaires. Part two of the questionnaire requested Governments to include information on indigenous women.

11. Twenty-four Governments provided information on indigenous women, specifically on Government measures, actions and policies aimed to improve the status of indigenous women, and on the obstacles and challenges to eliminate their discrimination and social and economic exclusion. The report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2005/2) contains a section summarizing those efforts.

12. Sixty indigenous women from around the world attended the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Their participation in the session was very active and productive, as they took part in eight side events, two press conferences and a one-week seminar on the United Nations system.

13. The Division for the Advancement of Women participates in and contributes to the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality task force on indigenous women. Representatives of the Division attended the meeting held in April 2005 aimed at achieving the medium-term objectives of the task force, namely, to identify successful interventions and good examples of United Nations work on indigenous women's issues, with emphasis on the Millennium Development Goals.

14. The Division contributes to the Intradepartmental Task Force on Indigenous Issues. It participated in the meeting held in September 2005 where the follow-up actions to the fourth session and the preparation of the fifth session of the Permanent Forum were discussed. The Division also provided its comments to the draft provisional framework for technical cooperation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

15. As part of the preparation of the in-depth study of the Secretary-General on violence against women, the Division has set up a task force to facilitate inputs. The International Indigenous Women's Forum, associated with Madre, an international human rights organization focusing on women's rights, is an active member of the task force and facilitates the channelling of information on the particular challenges and vulnerabilities indigenous women face. The Division invited non-governmental organizations to highlight key issues and recommendations that should be considered, as well as examples of good practices in addressing violence against women. It also hosted an online discussion to facilitate input and feedback from as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. Non-governmental organizations, including the Forum and CUSO (Canada), contributed to both, noting the specific concerns of indigenous women.

III. Division for Sustainable Development

16. Broad public participation in implementation is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Indigenous peoples are one of the nine major groups recognized by Agenda 21 as essential partners in the advancement of sustainable development.

17. Since the creation of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1992, major groups have been given important roles to play as partners in sustainable development. The Commission's meetings have provided innovative spaces for the input of non-governmental actors with the overall purpose of assisting the Commission's decision-making processes.

18. In preparing for the fourteenth session of the Commission, from 1 to 12 May 2006, which will focus on evaluating progress in implementing Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in relation to energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change, indigenous peoples' organizations have been invited to:

(a) Submit inputs to the reports of the Secretary-General;

(b) Participate in regional implementation meetings and contribute to the regional review of challenges and obstacles in the implementation of thematic clusters of the fourteenth session of the Commission;

(c) Prepare a discussion paper through the coordination of a steering group of indigenous peoples' organizations serving as organizing partners (namely, Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education) and the Indigenous Environmental Network, see http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/mgroups/mg_op). The discussion paper (available in all official languages) will represent the main written input of indigenous peoples to the Commission. The discussion paper reports on indigenous peoples' activities on the thematic cluster (see http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/docs_csd14.htm).

(d) Participate in the activities of the fourteenth session of the Commission, including:

- A dedicated multi-stakeholder dialogue session with major groups
- A ministerial dialogue session with major groups
- Thematic and regional discussions, the day dedicated to small island developing States, the partnerships fair and the learning centre
- Closing remarks on how major groups will initiate action on implementation in relation to the thematic cluster of issues.

19. The Division for Sustainable Development provides limited funding to indigenous peoples and other major group participants to enable their participation in Commission meetings. In 2005, the Division collaborated with indigenous peoples' groups and other major groups to ensure their involvement, contribution and participation in the preparatory process leading to the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Mauritius from 10 to 14 January 2005.

20. The indigenous peoples of small island developing States participated in thematic discussions and in a high-level round table, and contributed to the activities of the partnership fair and to the various side events organized during the Meeting. The Division has been able to secure the participation of representatives of about 20 major groups, including several indigenous peoples' representatives.